

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Seniors to Protest Loss of Caring Lifeline in State Capitol

One death and more than a week of protesting later, Margaret Burkes and other senior citizens and disabled residents of Schiffer Towers, are now facing the loss of a caring lifeline. The Detroit Wayne County Long Term Care Connection (LTCC), which provides individual assistance to older persons, persons with disabilities and their families, through proposed State budget cuts, is scheduled to close its doors by the end of May. But Ms. Burkes is not mourning, she's joining a group protesting the cuts at 10 a.m. May 13th at the State Capitol.

Ms. Burkes, who gets around with a walker, is a mover and a shaker among the residents of her housing complex. She organized residents to demonstrate for a week in front of their building about complaints that included increases in rat and roach infestations, a long backlog of needed repairs, and increased security measures that have led to seniors being denied access to areas near their apartments. She was outraged when resident Linda Napoleon, was found dead in her apartment earlier this month. Residents were not allowed to investigate and her sister had been denied access to the building.

Before this tragedy occurred the LTCC had made arrangements to reach out to residents of the building to provide them with information, counseling and assistance. However, when the LTCC was notified that its funding was being eliminated, Ms. Burkes knew that this caring lifeline would no longer be there for her or the residents of her complex. Older and disabled protesters will join protesting advocacy organizations outside a meeting of the House Appropriations Committee that meets on Wednesday morning to decide on ways to save various programs recently cut from the State budget.

Life in Schiffer Towers symbolizes how we neglect older persons in the society, said Daniel L. Martin, Vice President of the local Citizens District Council. The LTCC, a project that serves frail older persons in Eastern Wayne County, is one of four LTCC agencies that assist older persons and persons with disabilities to find services they need to live in the community rather than being forced to seek institutional care.
